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\$400,000 Community Outreach Partnership Center grant awarded to UMM

Summary:

(April 8, 2005)-Mayor Carol Wilcox and University of Minnesota, Morris Chancellor Sam Schuman are pleased to announce that the Morris community will be the beneficiary of a nearly \$400,000, three-year grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The Community Outreach Partnership Center's (COPC) grant was recently awarded to the University and will be administered by the Center for Small Towns, reaffirming the partnership between the campus and the community under the theme, "Adapting to Change: Managing Urbanization in Rural America."

The project will be guided by a Community Advisory Committee of about 40 local citizens and will include work on issues surrounding housing, economic development, community organizing and neighborhood revitalization.

Morris is only the fourth Minnesota awardee in the 10-year history of COPC and was one of 14 selected from 144 applicants nationwide. Morris is the smallest community ever to be awarded a COPC grant in the history of the program. Tom McRoberts, interim director of both the Center for Small Towns and Continuing Education and Regional Programs at UMM, said that the UMM-City of Morris partnership can be a model to illustrate what a community the size of Morris can do.

Small communities have some of the same issues that large metro areas do, said McRoberts. "Apart from scale, the problems of small communities need to be addressed too."

"We have a great relationship with the college," added City of Morris Mayor Carol Wilcox, who enthusiastically endorsed the partnership. "This grant will allow the City and the college to work together once again, and the end result will be a better community and a better college. We have an opportunity to address needs and brainstorm solutions. The grant will help us with funding for the best results. We are very grateful that a core group of interested individuals took the initiative to apply for the grant."

The grant process began about a year ago when approximately 30 representatives from both Morris and the UMM campus met in an advisory capacity to help shape the grant proposal. The community advisory group determined that outreach and research activities should focus in the areas of housing, economic development, and community organizing and neighborhood revitalization.

Specific outreach projects include: Geographic Information Systems Parcel Mapping the Habitat for Humanity Chapter Energizing Entrepreneurship and Business Mentoring Project Adopt a Grandparent Program and Take Back the Night/Operation Neighborhood Watch, and many others. Smaller teams will now be formed to implement the work on each of the projects.

"This is a wonderful opportunity to deepen the bonds between the campus and the community through the Center for

Small Towns. UMM and the City of Morris keep each other strong, and programs such as this will benefit us both," said Schuman.

For more information about the Center for Small Towns at UMM, call 320-589-6051, or see www.centerforsmalltowns.org

Through personal and academic discovery, the University of Minnesota, Morris provides opportunities for students to grow intellectually, engage in community, experience environmental stewardship and celebrate diversity. A renewable and sustainable educational experience, Morris prepares graduates for careers, for advanced degrees, for lifelong learning, for work world flexibility in the future, and for global citizenship. Learn more about Morris at morris.umn.edu or call 888-866-3382.